

## Smithsonian Museums

National Mall

Southwest Washington, D.C.

**Metro Stop:** Smithsonian



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In 1829 English scientist James Smithson bequeathed his fortune to the people of the United States to found an institution for the “increase and diffusion of knowledge.” The [Smithsonian Institution](#) was established in 1846 with these funds.

Today, the Smithsonian is the world's largest museum complex and research organization, composed of sixteen museums and galleries, as well as the National Zoo. The Smithsonian's exhibitions offer visitors a glimpse into its vast collection numbering over 142 million objects.

Ten of the Smithsonian museums span an area from 3rd to 14th Streets between Constitution Avenue and Independence Avenue. Other museums and the [National Zoo](#) are located elsewhere in the Washington, D.C. area.

Visitors can meander through the exhibits of the various museums at their own pace. Most museums and the National Zoo offer free [highlights tours](#). Many also offer regular scheduled exhibition tours and demonstrations.

Smithsonian museums are open daily, except December 25. Most museums are open from 10:00 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Summer hours are determined annually. There is no admission fee to visit any of the Smithsonian facilities in Washington, D.C.

### Smithsonian Links

- [Smithsonian Website](#)
- [Visitor Information](#)
- [Accessibility Information](#)
- [Location Maps](#)
- [Highlights Tours](#)

- [Hours of Operation for Individual Museums](#)
- [Links to&nbsp;Individual Museums](#)

### Places of Interest Nearby

- [National Mall](#)
- [National Archives](#)
- [U.S. Botanic Garden](#)

[Return Tours and Tickets](#)